



State of Utah

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NEWS RELEASE

October 19, 2005

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WAR ON NOXIOUS WEEDS AND INVASIVE SPECIES ON COLORADO RIVER CONTINUES

It's a war without bullets and the only casualty is the land upon which we live. Land managers are fighting a war against noxious weeds and invasive species that alter our landscape and ultimately how we may use those lands. Battles against these species are currently being aggressively fought along the banks of the Colorado River.

Perennial pepperweed (Tall Whitetop), Canada thistle, various types of Knapweed and Salt cedar (Tamarisk), have become major problems along the famous river way. For the past three years state and federal land managers have been working together to gain some control over the unwanted plants.

"One of our long-term goals is to eradicate a weed known as Purple Loosestrife," said James Montella, sovereign lands administrator with the Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands. "We'd like to control this plant before it has the chance to establish itself as profusely as some of the other invasive species, and we've been quite successful taking the population down by fifty percent in three years."

Agency personnel are floating the river in rafts to access areas where invasive weeds are predominating. Methods used to eliminate the noxious species include collecting seed heads; cutting, piling and burning larger species; and using aquatic environment approved herbicide. Efforts are being concentrated on the north and south banks of the Colorado River from the Colorado state line to the national park boundary at Canyonlands.

"Our efforts wouldn't be possible without the donations of time, equipment and people from local outfitters," noted Montella. "Canyon Voyages Adventure Expeditions, O.A.R.S. Canyonlands, Tag-A-Long River and Wilderness Expeditions, World Wide River Expeditions and Canyonlands By Night have all been involved."

In addition to the Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands, other agencies involved are the Bureau of Land Management, Grand County Weed Department, Colorado Mesa County Weed and Pest Department, The Colorado Division of Wildlife, USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Plant Protection and Quarantine, the Utah Division of Parks and Recreation, Utah Department of Transportation, Utah State University-Grand County Extension, Mesa State College and Recreation, and private land owners from both Utah and Colorado.

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